

ADVENT

XII. No. 2

April 1955

*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



Subscription : Inland, Rupees Five; Foreign, Twelve Shillings Six Pence

Inland : Single Copy, Rupee One and Annas Eight

PUBLICATION OFFICE :— SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, GEORGE TOWN, MADRAS



The Advent

Page

2

7

9

10

Response from the Divine

If there is openness of the psychic, then there is
always a consciousness of the response.

17

SRI AUROBINDO

20

20

24

28

47

52



THE MOTHER



THE MOTHER

The ADVENT

APRIL 1955

CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
EDITORIALS:	— <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	
LOVE DIVINE	...	... 5
FAITH AND PROGRESS	...	... 7
THOUGHT THE CREATOR	...	... 9
DEALING WITH A WRONG MOVEMENT	...	... 10
MAHABHARATA: THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLY HALL, CANTO II (A Translation)	— <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 13
THE EARLY INDIAN POLITY	— <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 17
SELF-TRANSCENDENCE	— <i>Rishabhchand</i>	... 20
SRI AUROBINDO AND EVOLUTION	— <i>M. L. Parthasarathi</i>	... 26
THE LIFE DIVINE: (A Synopsis)	— <i>N. Pearson</i>	... 32
THE HUMAN CYCLE (An Abridgement)	— <i>Sisir Kumar Ghosh</i>	... 38
THE PROPHET OF FUTURE HUMANITY	— <i>R. R. Diwakar</i>	... 47
REVIEW:		
FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDUISM	— <i>S. K. Maitra</i>	... 52

000

000

000

000

When one has an awakened soul, it is not easy
to get rid of it; so it is better to obey its orders.

THE MOTHER

000

000

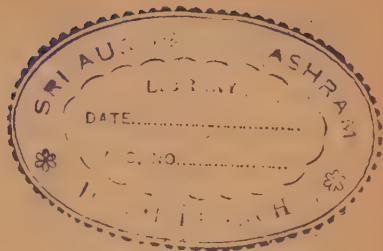
000

000

000

000

000



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIALS

LOVE DIVINE

“THE intensity of Divine Love does not produce any perturbation in any part of the being” (*The Elements of Yoga*). Why should it? If there is a perturbation, it is more likely that a different kind of love was in question. If it is Divine Love, there can be no perturbation, for each one receives it according to his capacity.

Divine Love is there in its full intensity, as a tremendous force. But most people, 99 out of 100, feel nothing at all. What they feel is exactly in proportion to what they are, what they can receive and hold. Indeed, you are always bathed in an atmosphere vibrant with divine love. Sometimes, on rare occasions, for a few seconds perhaps, there is all on a sudden, just the impression of something, and you say: “there, the divine love came to me!” Well, it is a way of saying: the true fact being that for some reason or other you happened to be just a little open and you had the perception of the thing that is always with you. The Love is there, the divine consciousness, too, is there in the same way. They are one, after all.

THE ADVENT

Once in a way, you find yourself, without any rhyme or reason as it were, in that happy state and you declare that the divine love has at last turned towards you! But, as I say, the matter is not like that. There came about an opening in you, perhaps no more than a pinpoint, and that was sufficient for the thing to rush in; for the atmosphere is surcharged with it and wherever there is a possibility of its being received, it is received. The same is true of all things divine. They are there: you do not receive or perceive them, because you are closed, shut off, blocked up. You are occupied, most of the time with other things. You are full of yourself, packed with it, and there is no room for anything else. You are not merely passively filled with yourself, but very actively, you are furiously busy with yourself. How can you notice then the marvellous things that are about you, around you? You get a glimpse unawares, perhaps when you are asleep; but it fades away soon. Man's ego is a formidable thing; the whole universe, to him, is a mere function of the ego. You are the centre and the entire creation revolves around you. Such is your vision of the universe. You do not see it as it is; you see only yourself when you look at it.

To begin, then, you must be able to come out of your ego. You will have to enter, as the first step, into something like a state of inexistence. There is only after you will begin to see things as they are, that is to say, from a height. If you want to see things as they truly are, you must become absolutely like a mirror—silent, peaceful, immobile, impartial, with no preferences, in a state of total receptivity. You will begin to see many things that did not seem to be there before, but were only now becoming active. Well, you may very well have gone inside one of these things instead of being shut up into a minute spot in the infinite universe, which you call yourself. There are many ways by which you can come out of yourself. Anyhow that is the one thing to be done, if you wish to see the world as it is, not as it seems to be a function of yourself.

Now to come out of the ego, you must have naturally first of all the will to do so. The surest way to do it is to give yourself to the Divine, not to pull the Divine towards you but to abandon yourself to Him. That is how you start forgetting yourself. Usually when people think of the Divine, the immediate impulse in them is to pull Him (or whatever they represent Him to be) towards themselves, within themselves. The result generally is that they receive nothing; and they complain: "Oh, I called and called. I prayed and prayed, but there was no answer, I received nothing, nothing came". But before complaining, ask yourself if you had offered yourself

EDITORIALS

You would find that instead of offering yourself you had pulled. Instead of being generous, open-handed and open-hearted, you were a miser, a beggar. When you pull, you remain wholly within yourself, shut up, sealed within your ego. You raise a wall of separation between you and the thing that is around you and wants to come in, which is thus not admitted, almost deliberately refused entrance. You enclose yourself within a prison and grumble that you have nothing, feel nothing. At least if you had opened a window you would have had something of the light and air about you.

FAITH AND PROGRESS

Q. When one makes an effort, makes a little progress, one gets satisfied and is proud of it. That spoils everything. How to get rid of this fault?

It is because one looks at oneself while doing a thing. It is the habit of constantly observing oneself as one works or lives. Certainly you must observe yourself; but more than that you must be sincere and spontaneous—spontaneous in what you do and not turning towards yourself all the while, judging, criticising, sometimes even severely. That is often as bad as patting oneself with satisfaction.

You must be sincere in your aspiration, you need not even know that you are aspiring: you should become the aspiration. When you can do that, you feel an extraordinary strength. One minute of such an experience prepares you for years of progress. When you are no longer a person, an ego always looking at itself, when you are the very action you do—especially in the act of aspiration—well, I say nothing can be better than that. When it is not a person that aspires, when the aspiration shoots up in a concentrated momentum, one can go very far. Otherwise there is a mixture of vanity, self-sufficiency, even self-pity, all kinds of petty movements which spoil the affair.

Q. What are the conditions for a descent of Faith?

The most important condition is trust, a childlike trust, the candid feeling that knows that needed things will come, that there is no question about it. When the child has need of anything, he is certain that it is coming. This kind of simple trust or reliance is the most important condition.

One must aspire, it is indispensable; but there are people who aspire but

THE ADVENT

with so much conflict within them, between faith and want of faith, trust and distrust, between optimism that is sure of victory and pessimism that is just waiting for the catastrophe to come etc. etc. If such is the state of your being, you may aspire but nothing will come out of it. You say, "I aspire and I get nothing"; that is because you are demolishing your aspiration all the while by your want of trust. But if truly you have the trust, things would be different. Children, for example, when they are left to themselves, when they have not been deformed by elderly people, have a great confidence that everything will be all right. When they have an accident, they never think that it will be anything serious. They have the spontaneous conviction that it will be set right soon and that helps things to get right soon. When you aspire for the Force, ask for the Divine's help, if you do it with an unshakable certitude that the thing will come, in that case, it is impossible for it not to come. In fact, as I say, such a conviction is in itself an inner opening. There are people who are naturally and automatically in this condition. Whenever or wherever there occurs an opportunity to receive something from above they are there present. And there are others who always fail to be on the spot when there is an occasion for the descent: they close themselves at the right moment. But they who have the childlike reliance, they never miss an opportunity. It is a very curious phenomenon. Apparently there may not be much difference between the two types. Both may have the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same desire to do one's best, but he who has a happy confidence in him, who does not question, who does not ask if he will have the thing or not, whether the Divine will answer or not—for, to him that is not the question, it is understood and taken for granted: "The thing I need I shall be given", he says, "if I pray my prayer will be granted, if I am in difficulty and I ask for help, the help will come, it will not only come but settle everything"—I say, the person who has such a spontaneous, candid, unquestioning reliance gets the best conditions under which an effective descent can occur; its action then is marvellous.

It is with your mental contradictions and doubts that you spoil everything, with this kind of ideas that enter into you when you are in difficulty: "It is impossible, I shall never come to the end of it, suppose the situation gets worse, suppose I am to roll down etc. etc.... In this way you build up a wall between you and the Force that you want to receive.

The psychic being has this trust, has it in a wonderful manner, without a shadow, without a question, without contradiction; and when it is there there is no prayer that remains unanswered, no aspiration unfulfilled.

THOUGHT THE CREATOR

HUMAN thought always creates forms in the mental world. It is a creative force. You are creating thought-forms constantly and sending them out into the atmosphere around; they go abroad to do their work. You are yourself surrounded always by such formations. No doubt there are people who cannot think clearly; they form around them only a kind of whirl. But they who think clearly and strongly create thought-forms that go out to accomplish their task and return when they are re-thought. There are cases of people who are troubled by their own formations that return to them or upon them as if to possess them and which they cannot get rid of; they do not know how to unmake a form which they make. When you have made a particularly strong formation, it remains always linked to you; it comes back again and again hitting your head and gathering force. In the end it is a necessity to you. There is a whole world of mystery to learn in this matter. Men live in ignorance; they have powers of which they are thoroughly unconscious or know very little.

Buddhists, I mean those who are in the more orthodox tradition, do not believe in God or an eternal Reality; they do not believe in gods either, that is to say, in beings who are truly divine. They, however, know admirably to use the mind and the mind's power. The Buddhist discipline makes you master of the mental instrument. A person following the Buddhist discipline came to me once and said that he had made an experiment: he had formed a being with his thought, he had created something like a Mahatma. He knew and it is a proved fact that these mental formations after a time begin to have a personal life, independently of the author,—although they may be connected with him, yet they are quite independent, in the sense that they have a will of their own. But now he was facing a formidable difficulty. He said: "Do you know I have formed my Mahatma so well that he has become a personality quite independent of me and comes all the while to trouble me? He comes, scolds me for this and that, advises me in this matter and that and wants to control my life altogether. I am unable to get rid of him. I find it extremely difficult and do not know how to go about it. As I say, my Mahatma has become extremely troublesome. He does not leave me to be at rest. He interferes in all my activities, prevents me from doing my work and yet I know it is my own creation and I am unable to do away with it." He explained to me how he tried to get rid of the thing I then told him it was because he did not know the trick. I showed to him the process and the next

THE ADVENT

morning he came happy and beaming, saying "it has left". He could not cut the connection; even then cutting the connection is not sufficient, for the being would continue to live apart and independent. What is needed is to re-absorb what one created, to swallow what was put out.

DEALING WITH A WRONG MOVEMENT

THERE is a great difference between pushing a thing away simply because you do not want it and changing the state of the consciousness so that the thing you do not want becomes completely foreign to your nature. Usually when you have a movement in you which you do not like you drive it back and repel, but you do not take the trouble of finding in yourself that which served and serves still as a support to the movement, the particular tendency, the turn of consciousness which enables the thing to enter into the consciousness. If, however, instead of a gesture of mere condemnation and suppression, you enter deep into your vital consciousness and find out the support, that is to say, the small vibration of a special kind embedded far in a corner, often a corner so dark that it is difficult to see it is there, if, in spite of all difficulty, you concentrate and follow on the track of the thing, the origin of the movement, then at the end you discover quite a small snake-like thing, coiled up, quite small, not bigger than a pea, but very black and embedded firmly. There are then two procedures: either to throw a light so intense, the light of the truth-consciousness, so strong upon the point that the thing is dissolved or to seize the little object as with a pair of pincers, pull it out and place it before your consciousness. The first method is radical, but you have not always at your disposal the light of the Truth and you cannot make use of it whenever you like. So you have to take to the second method. You may follow it, but it will give you pain, a pain as great as when a tooth is being pulled out. I do not know if any of you had the experience, but it is painful. Usually, however, what you do in the presence of an undesirable movement is to try to wipe it away—gently, I suppose—or cover it up; thus things continue as before. You do not have the courage and so things do not change. Yes, it gives you pain; the pain is usually here in the heart. But if you have the courage, it is better to pull out the thing than to temporize with it; pull it out and put it in front of your gaze; it dissolves. That makes an end of it and you are cured. The thing will not come into you any more to trouble you.

EDITORIALS

But the operation is radical and it has to be done as an operation.

In the beginning you need a great perseverance in seeking out the thing. For normally when you are in search of these things, the mind comes in and deploys a thousand and one reasons and favourable explanations so that you may not pursue the enquiry. It tells you: "no, it is not your fault at all; it is the circumstances, it is the people, it is things coming from outside, it is this and it is that", all excellent excuses, and if you are not firm in your resolution, you let things go on and you are where you were; the thing will come back to trouble you again and you have to begin all over once more. But if you have done the operation, everything is done with. Do not trust the mind and its explanations. It might inspire you to say: "yes, yes, on other occasions it was like that, I admit, I was indeed in the wrong; but this time, I am sure, it is not my fault etc. etc.". If you do not deal firmly with your adversary, it will be always there, hiding in the subconscious, lodged there comfortably, coming up any day you are off your guard. I have seen people cherishing the evil in this way for more than thirty-five years. And if one does not go about it in the right way, there is no reason why the things should not continue life after life. The only safe way then is to do the operation, cost what it may. For it gives you the final relief. I say, when you throw the spot of light upon the place, it burns, it sears. But you must bear it. You must have the sincerity that does not allow you to draw back, to cover up the place and retire. You must instead throw it wide open, receive the blow straight upon you.

I have told you to seek out the place where the hidden thing lies. The black thing has many a cosy corner in your being. There are people who have it in the head, some in the heart, others down below; but wherever it is when you track it down it has the same look, the little black creature rolled up, not bigger than a pea but hard and firmly set, a microbe-size snake coiled up. If it is something in the head it becomes somewhat difficult to discover. For the head is full of wrong ideas and it is not easy to put it into order for pursuing the right track. A comparatively easier place to discover and to cure is in the heart; but here it gives the greatest pain. But here it is found more easily and cured also most radically. Down below in the vital things are very confused and obscure. All things are mixed up in a veritable chaos. The movements are also more violent, more uncontrollable and ignorant. Here are all the movements of anger, pride, ambition, passion, all attachments and sentimentalities, the hunger that you call love. And there are a hundred others. There are as many kinds in the

THE ADVENT

head too. There it is the perversions of thought, all the betrayals, the betrayals of your soul. It is inconceivable how one betrays one's soul, in how many ways, how persistently, the decisions, the points of view, the favourable explanations which your brain supplies to buttress you against your perception that you have done something wrong. You have to disentangle all this, put each thing in its place, throw upon each the light of your true consciousness and judge—burn, purify or transform.

MAHABHARATA

(A Translation)

THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLY HALL*

CANTO II

THE DEBATED SACRIFICE

.....

...**B**UT when Yudhishtere had heard
The sages' speech, his heart was moved with sighs.
He coveted Imperial Sacrifice.
All bliss went from him. Only to his thought
The majesty of royal saints was brought
By sacrifice exalted, Paradise
Acquired augustly, and before his eyes
He most was luminous who in heaven shone,
Heaven by sacrificial merit won.
He too that offering would absolve; so now
Receiving reverence with a courteous bow,
The assembly broke, to meditate retiring
On that great sacrifice of his desiring.
Frequent the thought and ever all its length
His mind leaned that way. Yet though huge his strength,
His heroism though admired, the King
Forgot no Right, but pondered how this thing
Might touch the peoples, whether well or ill.
For just was Yudhishtere and courted still
His people and with vast impartial mind
Served all, nor ever from this word declined,

* *Sabhāparvan*

THE ADVENT

“To each his own; nor shall the king disturb
With wrath or violence Right, but these shall curb”.
So was all speech of men one grand acclaim;
The nation as a father trusted him:
No hater had he in his whole realm’s bound,
By the sweet name of Enemyless renowned.
And through his gracious government upheld
By Bhema’s force and foreign battle quelled
By the two-handed might of great Arjuun;
Sahadave’s cultured equity and boon,
Nocoola’s courteous mood to all men shown,
The thriving provinces were void of fear;
Strife was forgotten and each liberal year
The rains were measured to desire; nor man
The natural limit of his course outran:
Usury, tillage, rearing, merchandise
Throve with good government and sacrifice
Prospered; rack-renting was not nor unjust
Extortion; from the land pestilence was thrust,
And mad calamity of fire unknown
Became while this just monarch had his own.
Robbers and cheats and royal favourites
Were now not heard of to infringe men’s rights
Nor the king’s harm nor mutual injury
Intrigue. To yield into his treasury
Their taxes traders came and princes high
On the sixfold pretexts of policy,
Or at Yudhishtere’s court good grace to win.
Even greedy, passionate, luxurious men
His just rule to the common welfare turned.
He in the glory of all virtues burned,
An all-pervading man, by all adored,
An emperor and universal lord
Bearing upon his shoulders the whole State,
And from the neatherd to the twice-born great
All in his wide domains that lived and moved,
Him more than father, more than mother loved.
He now his brother and his ministers

Summoning severally their mind infers
 And often with repeated subtle speech
 Sollicitous questions and requestions each.
 To institute Imperial Sacrifice
 All with one cry unanimous advise.
 "O King" they said "the man by God designed
 Who has acquired the Oceanic mind
 Of kingship, not with this bounds his pretence,
 But hungers for imperial excellence.
 In thee it dwells, high Cowrove;¹ we thy friends
 See clear that Fate this sacrifice intends.
 To complete heroes it is subject. Men
 Who centre chivalry within them gain
 With ancient chants the perfect fires
 Compiled by sages, lords of their desires
 Through self-control intense. The serpentine
 And all rites other in this one rite twine.
 And he who at its end is safely crowned
 Is as World Conqueror, is as King renowned.
 Puissance is thine, great-armed, and we are thine,
 O King, soon then shall Empire crown thy line;
 O King, debate no longer; aim thy will
 At Sacrifice Imperial". So they still
 Advised their king together and apart,
 And deep their accents sunk into his heart.
 Bold was their speech, rang pleasant to his ear,
 Seemed excellent and just, yet Yudhishtere
 Still pondered though he knew his puissance well.
 Again he bade his hardy brothers tell
 Their mind and priests high-souled and ministers:
 With Dhowma and Dwypaia too confers,
 Wise and deliberate he. "Speak justly, friends,
 What happy way my hard desire attends.
 Hard is the sacrifice imperial meant
 For an imperial mind's accomplishment".
 All answered with a seasonable voice:

¹Kaurava

THE ADVENT

“Just King, thine is that mind and thou the choice
Of Fate for this high ceremony renowned”.
Sweet did the voice of friends and flamens sound:
Yet still he curbed himself and still he thought.
His yearning for the people’s welfare wrought
A noble hesitation. Wise the man
Who often will his power and vantage scan,
Who measures means with the expenditure,
Season with place, then acts; his deeds endure:
“Not with my mere resolve the enterprise
Begins and ends of this great sacrifice”.
While thus in a strong grasp his thought he held,
His mind to Krishna who all beings excelled
Of mortal breed, for surest surity ran,
Krishna, the strong unmeasurable man
Whom Self-born upon earth conjectured he
Because his deeds measured with deity.
“To Krishna’s mind all things are penetrable,
His genius knows not the impossible”.
Pondered the son of Hades, “nor is there
A weight his mighty mind cannot upbear”.

(to be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

THE EARLY INDIAN POLITY

THE principle of popular rule is the possession of the reins of the government by the mass of the people, but by the possession is not intended necessarily the actual exercise of administration. When the people are able to approve or to disapprove of any action of the Government with the certainty that such approval or disapproval will be absolutely effective, the spirit of democracy is present even if the body is not evolved. India in her ancient polity possessed the spirit of democracy. Like all Aryan nations she started with the three great divisions of the body politic, King, Lords and Commons, which have been the sources of the various forms of government evolved by the modern nations. In the period of the Mahabharat we find that the King is merely the head of the race, possessed of executive power but with no right to legislate and even in the exercise of his executive functions unable to transgress by a hair's breadth the laws which are the sum of the customs of the race. Even within this limited scope he cannot act in any important matter without consulting the chief men of the race who are usually the elders and warriors; often he is cipher, a dignified President, an ornamental feature of the polity which is in the hands of the nobles. This position is that of first among equals, not that of an absolute prince or supreme ruler. We find this conception of kingship continued till the present day in the Rajput States; at Udaipur, for instance, no alienation of land can take place without the signature of all the nobles; although the Maharaja is the head of the State, the sacred descendent of the Sun, his power is a delegated authority. The rule of the King is hereditary, but only so long as he is approved of by the people. A tyrannical king can be resisted, an unfit heir can be put aside on the representation of the Commons. This idea of kingship is the old Aryan idea, it is limited monarchy and not the type of despotism which is called by the Western writers Oriental, though it existed for centuries in Europe and has never been universal in Asia.

The Council of Chiefs is a feature of Indian polity universal in the time of Mahabharata. That great poem is full of accounts of the meetings of these Councils and some of the most memorable striking events of the

story are there transacted. The *Udyoga Parva* especially gives detailed accounts of the transactions of these Councils meetings with the speeches of the princely Orators. The King sits as President, hears both sides and seems to decide partly on his own responsibility, partly according to the general sense of the assembly. The opinion of the Council was not decided by votes, an invention of the Greeks, but as in the older Aryan systems, was taken individually from each Councillor. The King was the final arbiter and responsible for the decision, except in nations like the Yadavas where he seems to have been little more than an ornamental head of an aristocratic polity.

Finally, the Commons in the Mahabharata are not represented by any assembly because the times are evidently a period of war and revolution in which the military caste had gained an abnormal preponderance. The opinion of the people expresses itself in public demonstrations of spontaneous character, but does not seem to have weighed with the proud and self-confident nobles who ruled them. This feature of the Mahabharata is obviously peculiar to the times, for we find that the Buddhist records preserve to us the true form of ancient Indian polity. The nations among whom Buddha lived were free communities in which the people assembled as in Greek and Italian States to decide their own affairs. A still more striking instance of the political existence of the Commons is to be found in the Ramayana. We are told that on the occasion of the association of Rama as Yuvaraj in the government, Dasaratha summoned a sort of States General of the Realm to which delegates of the different provinces and various orders, religious, military and popular were summoned in order to give their sanction to the act of the King. A speech from the throne is delivered in which the King states the reasons for his act, solicits the approval of his people and in case of their refusal of sanction asks them to meet the situation by a counter proposal of their own. The assembly then meets "separately and together", in other words, the various Orders of the Realm consult first among themselves and then together and decide to give their sanction to the King's proposal.

The growth of large States in India was fatal to the continuance of the democratic element in the constitution. The idea of representation had not yet been developed, and without the principle of representation democracy is impossible in a large State. The Greeks were obliged to part with their cherished liberty as soon as large States began to enter into the Hellenic world; the Romans were obliged to change their august and cherished

THE EARLY INDIAN POLITY

institutions for the most absolute form of monarchy as soon as they had become a great Empire; and democracy disappeared from the world until the slow development of the principle of representation enabled the spirit of democracy to find a new body in which it could be reborn. The contact with Greek and Persian absolutism seems to have developed in India the idea of the divinity of Kinghood which had always been a part of the Aryan system; but while the Aryan King was divine because he was the incarnate life of the race, the new idea saw a divinity in the person of the King as an individual,—a conception which favoured the growth of absolutism. The monarchy of Chandragupta and Asoka seems to have been of the new type copied perhaps from the Hellenistic empires, in which the nobles and the commons have disappeared and a single individual rules with absolute power through the instrumentality of officials. The Hindu King, however, never became a despot like the Caesars, he never grasped the power of legislation but remained the executor of laws over which he had no control nor could he ignore the opinion of the people. When most absolute, he has existed only to secure the order and welfare of society, and he has never enjoyed immunity from resistance or the right to disregard the representation of his subjects. The pure absolutist type of monarchy entered India with the Mahomedans who had taken it from Europe and Persia and it has never been accepted in its purity by the Hindu temperament.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Bande Mataram*, March 22, 1908)

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

FROM the spiritual standpoint life is compared to a pilgrimage and man is called a pilgrim of eternity. But he is a pilgrim that continually changes as he advances, and his pilgrimage is a subjective journey, a progress from one state of consciousness to another, and yet another, till the supreme infinite consciousness, विष्णोयंत् परमं पदम्, is reached. This progress is the secret sense of evolution, and the biological and surface psychological changes that we observe in evolution are but its incidents and results. If we could probe into the heart of the animals and plants, we shall witness the same progress of consciousness—only it is not our mental consciousness—proceeding with colossal difficulty against the dull drag of the material inconscience. In fact, the journey from one state and poise of consciousness to another, the ascent from one peak of being to another which is higher, सानोः सानुम् is the whole hidden purpose of life, for so, indeed, can it attain to the infinite bliss it secretly longs for. From inconscience to superconscience there is an infinite gradation of the planes of consciousness—inconscience is not an absence but only an involution of consciousness—a far-flung ladder of ascent which our being traverses from life to life; and what we ignorantly dread as death is but a period of selection, assimilation and rest necessary for this inescapable labour. Our very nature pushes us towards the heights and demands of us a constant effort at self-transcendence. It does not allow us to rest for long in the possession of a particular state or the enjoyment of a particular object—it spurs us on with a divine discontent.

How does this journey proceed? At first it is prepared and led by the lower nature of the Ignorance, Avidya. Slowly, tentatively, almost imperceptibly, through many hesitations and hazards and detours, and without the consent and cooperation of our being, she contrives its progress. She suckles and nurses our being even when it lies asleep or drowsy in her folds. And she does not count the cost in this fateful adventure of its total awakening. Pleasure and pain, struggle and suffering, gain and loss, honour and disgrace, disaster and death, all are grist to her mill, and she makes our being pass through all these experiences, so that their rude impacts

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

may awaken it to a knowledge of itself and the world in which it is set to grow and fulfil itself. Profoundly kind and compassionate, she puts on the mask of hardness and cruelty, and makes her children taste of the bitter poisons of life, so that they may yearn after the nectar of immortality. Pain is the most powerful device she uses to impel our being forward on its evolutionary journey. But when it is sufficiently awakened and aware of itself and its destiny, she develops in it a conscious will to self-transcendence and teaches it how to control and conquer her modes of ignorance and convert them into a colourful play of knowledge and bliss.

According to Sri Aurobindo, Nature's method of self-transcendence—for Nature too follows the soul in its self-transcendence—is a triple movement of ascent, expansion and integration. The ascent of consciousness is the first and most fundamental thing, for consciousness is the essence of our being, and a transcendence of consciousness must necessarily precede all transcendence of being and nature. When our consciousness rises to a higher plane, it is not only that we have ascended to a height from which we can command a vision of new places and sights, but that we have ourselves undergone a considerable change and observe the world, subjective and objective, with new eyes. Not only a vision of new things, but a new vision of all things and a deeper and wider outlook on life, is the main characteristic of the ascent of consciousness. That is why an ascent of consciousness is appropriately called a new birth, an awakening to an unprecedented view and vision of existence. And when we rise still higher, our vision deepens and widens again, newer truths swim into our ken and our outlook on life undergoes another sea-change.

But the ascent has to be accompanied by a widening, otherwise we attain only to the truths of the heights and miss those of the environing expanses. Even while shooting towards the transcendent, we must not neglect to embrace the universal and identify ourselves with the truths, principles and powers of the transcendent which seek self-expression in the world. A vertical ascent without a horizontal expansion of consciousness leads always to a high but narrow and lop-sided realisation; and to this narrowness we can safely trace much of the intolerant exclusiveness of sectarian religion and spirituality.

But the ascent and the expansion, by themselves, would hardly produce any profound and far-reaching effect on life were they not accompanied by a movement of integration. The object of ascent and expansion being, not an irrevocable departure from life and nature but an entire perfection

and fulfilment of them in the world, it is indispensable that all the parts of our nature and all the elements of our life should be raised up, integrated in a dynamic unity and permeated and transfigured by the gains of the ascent and the widening. A searching study of evolution shows that an integrated sublimation is the ultimate end of Nature's travail, and that is the fullest sense of self-transcendence. Nature does not let the material organism of her creatures starve and languish when she evolves the diverse richness of their life, nor does she suffer their life-parts to wane and wilt when she is busy evolving and enlarging the mind in them. Life vitalises the body and supplants more and more its primal inertia by its own galvanic force, and the mind refines and enlightens the physical consciousness and, touching life with its growing light, seeks to reduce its wildness and anarchy to order and rhythm. This work of integration must continue even when our being ascends to the higher planes of the Spirit. A sudden break in the evolutionary work of Nature and a categoric rejection of the active parts of our being on the possession of the silent Self or the Spirit, is an intense but narrow movement of spiritual impatience, not the large and comprehensive way of realising the integral Divine. A progressive inclusion, an embracing comprehension and coordination, is the right law of evolution, not a sharp rejection or a summary exclusion.

Each crucial step of ascent is, as we have already seen, a new birth, a new birth of consciousness; but when the ascent is supplemented by a widening and consolidated by integration, it results in a new birth of our whole being. The very field and base of our life are then lifted up to the heights of the Spirit, bathed in their light and cradled on their bliss. This integrated sublimation is what the Gita suggests by the term *सद्भावमागताः*. It is the assumption of the divine nature by an integral transformation. It is making the summits and the base of our being meet in an inviolable harmony.

But self-transcendence of the whole being is the most difficult thing to achieve in life, immensely more difficult than the liberation of the soul or its merger in the Absolute. It literally means passing through an almost interminable series of deaths during one's life-time; dying many times before one's death, not certainly like a coward in the Shakespearean sense, but like a brave soldier of the Spirit, a spiritual hero. It means the shearing of our being of all that is false and ungodly, ignorant and egoistic—all that seeks to perpetuate our troubled life in the dark valleys. It means to be hauled up by a spiritual force from the normal level of our being

and placed on a higher. There is a tug and wrench felt in the hauling, a sharp pain as of the knots of the heart suddenly snapping, *bhidyate hridaya-granthi*, a forced severance from all that has been dear and near, all that has been the apple of one's eye and the balm of one's heart. It means seeing oneself fade away, inch by inch, hour by hour, cutting off the old moorings, sighing farewell to all that has been friendly and familiar, stripping, till one is bare and nude in the chill air of the large spaces, and launching forth upon the uncharted seas of the Unknown. The agony of the process feels excruciating at times,—it surpasses even the pangs of death, for the old Adam dies very hard indeed. "Hidden in the recesses of the heart" something shudders at the poignant thought of the final parting. It clings desperately to all that the life's joy cherishes, "the felicity it must leave lost for ever", and finds itself torn between two contrary pulls. Or the consciousness of the pilgrim comes often wheeling down from the newly attained heights to browse in the old, familiar pastures and gloat over and dote upon the old, cherished objects. Then, for a moment, the old infatuation comes to life again, the little endearing details of the past hold him under their overmastering spell—Maya's charms weave a fresh enchantment around him. Earth seems to smile in a sudden return of springtide. The hungers of the heart, the desires of life, the preferences of the mind assail him with a revived fascination and appeal to him to stay in their midst and not leave them again. But leave he must, for the call from above is imperative and the urge from within is irresistible. The outcry of the emotions, the pull of the senses, the importunities of the flesh cannot prevail against the call of the Divine and the aspiration of the soul. A power immeasurably greater than that of the heart or the senses lifts him up and sweeps him on, and there is no rest and respite for him till he attains the highest supreme, *paramā parāvat*, and can say with the Vedic Rishis:

"I have arisen from earth to the midworld. I have arisen from the mid-world to heaven, from the level of the firmament of heaven I have gone to the Sun-world, the Light."¹

But self-transcendence is not only a matter of struggle and anguish. It has

¹ Yajur Veda

cf. "And never can the mighty traveller rest
And never can the mystic voyage cease
Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
And the moons of God have overtaken his night."

its thrills of wonder and ecstasies of joy, unimaginable on the normal levels of human life. The pilgrim's consciousness feels, as it wings up, a peace, a freedom, a purity, a beatific lightness, a serene silence which are strangers to the earth atmosphere. Caring no more "for the whispers and shoutings in the darkness", it passes, "from the sphere of the grey and the little, leaving the cry and the struggle", to the vast, tranquil realms of the Spirit.

"At each pace of the journey marvellous
A new degree of wonder and of bliss,
A new rung formed in Being's mighty stair,
A great wide step trembling with jewelled fire
As if a burning spirit quivered there
Upholding with his flame the immortal hope,
As if a radiant God had given his soul
That he might feel the tread of pilgrim feet
Mounting in haste to the Eternal's house."¹

There in those unvalled regions there is no goad of desire, no sting of ambition, no forlorn hopes, no withering disappointments—none of those besetting dualities and passions that torture our brief, unrestful existence upon earth. The world's senseless murmurs, its corroding cares, its treacherous lure of false glimmers do not impinge upon those radiant immensities. There the pilgrim realises how blindly he has lived in the world of fleeting forms, hugging shadows and chasing after the mirage of evanescent pleasures. His soul shines there in its native glory—unfettered, unconditioned and illimitable. There the enduring realities of existence reveal themselves to his unsealed vision, delivering him from the bondage of appearances. There he knows what he essentially is and what he can yet become; and in wooing the Infinite, he woos the Omnipotent, the Beautiful and the Blissful, and qualifies for the realisation of his infinite possibilities.

Those who have not passed through this process of self-transcendence know nothing of the experiences it entails, experiences of exaltation and ecstasy alternating with those of struggle and agony—the alternation of day and night of which the Vedic mystics symbolically speak. Theirs is a drab existence of the squalid plains of life. But even they will be shaken one day out of their uninspiring drabness. For Nature the enchantress is at

¹ Savitri by Sri Aurobindo—Book II, Canto XXII

heart the benignant Mother, the compassionate deliverer. When she strikes the being awake, she opens before it prospects after dazzling prospects of a limitless self-fulfilment, which can be realised only by a relentless self-transcendence.

The sole principle of transcendence in our composite being is the soul or the psychic. When it awakes, it pants "to breathe the infinite", "to soar in eternity" and escape from the bondage of Time and Space. It feels stifled in the prison of the lower nature. It is, in fact, the real pilgrim in man, हंसो भ्राम्मते.

Aspiration and renunciation are the double power by which the soul achieves self-transcendence. Renunciation releases it from its earthly chains and aspiration launches it into the Infinite. Renunciation is the loosening of the inner knots and the breaking of the inner bonds, and aspiration the irresistible élan towards the True, the Good, the Beautiful. Both by their conjoint action carry the pilgrim beyond the kingdom of death and darkness, तमसः परस्तात्.

But, Sri Aurobindo insists, self-transcendence to be *perfect and fruitful, in life*, must be a self-transcendence of the whole being, and not of the consciousness alone; and for that one has to follow the triple method of Nature—ascend, widening and integration. The physical, the vital, the mental being, all have to be delivered from their own egoistic formations and from the hold of the cosmic ignorance, lifted into the Truth-Light of the Spirit and unified in a harmony of dynamic action. It is partial and imperfect transcendence that leaves the instrumental being in the obscurity of ignorance while the soul stands transfigured in the glory of the Supreme. An integral self-transcendence is the aim of evolution and the ultimate destiny of man.

Self-transcendence is the greatest means of deliverance and freedom. While the ascetic represses and wrestles with his desires and passions, the enlightened yogi quietly rises beyond them and feels free. Self-transcendence is a liberating movement of knowledge and its perfection an integral self-fulfilment by an integral self-transfiguration; for transcendence always transfigures.

RISHABHCHAND

SRI AUROBINDO AND EVOLUTION

“AS natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental environments will tend to progress towards perfection.” —Charles Darwin

“In this progress (of mental to the supra-mental) the body also may reach a more perfect form and a higher range of its expressive powers become more and more perfect vessels of divinity.” — Sri Aurobindo

The father of the Theory of Biological Evolution, Darwin of 19th century, so often attacked by philosophers, has found a spiritual descendant in Sri Aurobindo in 20th century, who, undoubtedly, is the father of the Scientific Spiritual Evolution which he has developed so far, up to the stage of seedling one day to spread its roots and branches-wide over the world. He took the cue from the former's pronouncement, quoted above, to stretch it further and culminate it in what he pronounced as quoted above. Sri Aurobindo's unostensive and non-sensational work is as much spectacular as the process of Evolution itself which is like the hands of a clock progressing without visible pace but presenting the final goal. It can safely be said that it has not yet caught the imagination of the East as much as it has of the West. It is definitely due to the presence, in Sri Aurobindo, of a clear consummation of “western dynamism and eastern poise”, a fine embellishment of occidental best with pristine oriental truth, oriental truth integrated by occidental best, and a symbiosis of supreme art with highest science.

Ever since Darwin postulated his theory, and much more so in recent years, all the scientists have been bestowing their thoughts as to the nature of next step in the progress of evolution of man, and the possibility of further progress of modifications in humanity. All the arguments boiled down to the fact that the baby-science of Psychology or the Science of Mind is slowly penetrating itself into the realm of Biology or Science or Life, as, it appears, it ought to, and that the future course of evolution is not essentially biological, though certainly analogous to, but must be of a nature biological cum psychical.

To find unity in diversity, or a common current that flows in all, being

the thirst of the Scientist,—(who was then called the Natural Philosopher, and I do not know why they do not strive to retain the appropriate epithet)—the earlier scientists produced the famous classified table of elements and indivisible atom respectively. The classified table showed a common force that runs through all elements and fore-cast the nature and properties of undiscovered elements which were subsequently discovered. The indivisible atom later on became divisible, unfolding the mysterious amount of energy in the form of electrons or electrical charges. A specific number of these electrical charges in an atom imparts the nature to the elements, whether 'goldness', 'leadness' or 'copperness'. Thus the possibility of transmutation of elements.

In the depth of the past under the then existing circumstances and environmental conditions most suitable for the curious combination of certain elements of inanimate matter, the terrific energy with specific number of electrical charges manifested itself as a spark of new energy in the form of a spec of 'Life'. (What guided the carbon and nitrogen to form the main principles to release this new type of energy, and not gold and lead for this purpose, is still in the realm of discussion.) That life organised itself from inanimate matter has been sufficiently proved including the evidence given by the disease producing *Virus*, which is giving head-ache to all as to its true nature, some saying that it is a highly organised complex protein molecule, and some inclined to believe it as animate. This, probably, proves the link between the animate and the inanimate. When once the spec of life, containing the new form of force, came into being, call it *Amoeba* or whatsoever, this new force unfolded from matter, went on unfolding itself further and further, changing its vehicle with consequent change in structure, leading to complicated forms, by a graded series of beautifully connected forms, the new forms or vehicles resulting mostly under new environmental conditions like upheavals of earth and so on, when the fittest flourished and weakest perished, until *Amoeba* allowed itself to emerge as Man. That is, therefore, mere statement of process of evolution, after tracing a common current of force running through inorganic to organic.

Thus, we perceive, that the inanimate matter with its electrical charges reorientated itself in such a way that a specific number and form of structures called chromosomes in the new substance determines the frogness, dogness or manness—to speak broadly for the sake of analogy with electrons whose number similarly determines the type of elements. A further reorganisation of living substance resulted in a still further manifestation of this energy

unfolded as 'consciousness' which later on, by continued reorganisation, culminated in the unfoldment of a 'mind'. This, at present, is the highest form of matter on earth, with all its varied forms of activities, always heading towards more and more unfoldment of its nature. Mental consciousness, therefore, has its roots in matter; and after a long controversy, people like Sullivan the great Physicist, are inclined to say "it is quite possible that the actual substance of the universe is mental, that the stuff of events is similar to percepts." And behold what Sri Aurobindo has asserted "that which is involved can only evolve." He says that matter has veiled consciousness which is responsible for its own unfoldment by various stages through which it has undergone, so far. It has been an unconscious affair in the organisms until man resulted.

On the arrival of 'mind' into the arena of this world in the form of humanity, evolution became a much more complicated affair, complication worse complexified, since the evolving matter itself, now, is thinking of its own evolution. "What further course shall I take?" is the potent question put by itself. Since evolution is becoming, hence forwards, a conscious affair, if the question is not properly answered and if the evolving matter is not given proper and correct environment for further unfoldment, it is bound to lead towards the down-hill path of perdition, possibly retracing its foot-steps, heightening the animality in man, subduing his divinity, for man is now a transitional form between animality and divinity. This is the highest truth that is hammered by Sri Aurobindo who, however, is on the clearest optimistic side in pronouncing, "As Nature has evolved beyond matter and manifested life, beyond life manifested mind, so she must evolve beyond mind and manifest a consciousness and power of our existence free from the imperfection and limitation of our mental existence, a supramental or truth-consciousness and able to develop the power and perfection of the spirit." He further says that "the animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she (Nature) wills to work out the superman, the God; or shall we not, rather say, to manifest God?" Thomas Henry Huxley, the biologist of the 19th century says, "it is clearly within the limits of possibility that some greater intellect may be able to mirror the whole past and the whole future; if the universe is penetrated by a medium of such a nature that a magnetic needle on the earth answers to a commotion in the sun, an omnipresent agent is also conceivable." His descendent Julian Huxley says, "Man has to accelerate, by means of his

consciousness what in the past has been the work of blind unconscious forces." J.B.S. Haldane falls in line and opines, "the time will come, probably, when men, in general, will accept the future evolution of their species as a probable fact....It is the business of the mythologist to present the idea. They cannot do so without combining creative imagination and biological knowledge."

The quotations made above are only to drive home the fact of the psychic bent which the evolving mind has taken, and, without taking recourse to more quotations, suffice it to say that there is an increasing necessity felt to probe into the anatomy of mind and its vast possibilities. It is admitted that a mind developing under certain proper environmental conditions, can discover the Laws under which Universe operates and "bring the gamut of experience within the work of an art." None, so far, except Sri Aurobindo, has attempted at this stupendous work of bringing "the gamut of experience within the work of an art." He has dived into the past history of life, pierced into the workings of the present form, and is able to fore-cast that the super-man with a supra-mental make-up is an inevitability on this earth. If the science of matter could reveal the properties and nature of undiscovered matter that were, later on, discovered as revealed by the clues, if the science of plants and animals could reconstruct the nature and qualities of those that were in existence million years ago, a mind of a very high order and its science, thereof, can necessarily fore-see the nature and qualities of the future being after man, the supra-mental being. Sri Aurobindo has forecast the same, complete with physical and mental anatomy. He predicts that pure biological evolution will take a different turn. Mental consciousness sprouts and spreads, with physical body as its host. The whole body, the cells with protoplasm, become centres of psychic energy. This step towards psychic from mental, is called Psychicisation of the body in Sri Aurobindo's voluminous monumental work, "The Life Divine" with which and others of his books, the writer frankly admits of a nodding acquaintance only. He knows, only, A of Aravind, so far, with eagerness to know the rest up to D and divinity.

Sri Aurobindo says that the sporadic emergence of rare gifts in human beings during their mental state, in the form of flashes and sparks of inspiration, art, music, poetry, literature and allied forms are but manifestations of Higher Nature or psychic-part that, at present, stays in the background, imprisoned or enveloped, as it were. In his poetical work, "Savitri", the last of his writings, that gorgeous work of symbolic presentation of Cosmic-

process—the birth of the cosmic being, its nature and its fate—, he pours out:—

“Always we bear in us a magic key
Concealed in life’s hermetic envelop”. (p. 46)

Man being conscious, it is for him to watch and catch the key in its sporadic manifestations, open and unfold the psychic consciousness, and make it predominate over the physical consciousness. This achieved, the next two phases of Spiritualisation and Supra-mentalisation follow, by a gradual process of delimiting and relegating the physical processes that finally metamorphose themselves into the supreme type of consciousness, when the physical entity, no doubt exists—as it must and should—but remaining absolutely in the background, a place which was once the prison-house of supramental consciousness. To attempt at further explanation of these terms and processes relating to cosmic process by searching for a proper vehicle to convey, when there are no proper counter-parts, as yet, is to indulge, at least on my part, in mere presumption. It is as much difficult for a man in mental state to visualise and describe the supramental state as it is difficult for an ant to think of man. Suffice it to say that Sri Aurobindo lays down the three mechanisms of heightening, widening and integration that follow these processes. Heightening is done when the finer instincts are given scope to develop, widening, when they fully express themselves spontaneously, without effort; and integration, when they form part and parcel of the whole entity—somewhat analogous to the conscious effort that man imparts to plants and animals for their evolution by the process of selection, propagation and fixation of a desired character.

The great task, therefore, as Sri Aurobindo says, is to speed up and assist and co-operate with the process of evolution in its goal of achieving the supramental from its being mental. This can only happen when we can create a supramental environment, such that the Supramental Force will descend and work up its will. It has been pointed out, already, in earlier paragraphs dealing with biological evolution, that environment played a larger part in the emergence of a new type. A particular species of plant, cultivated under two different ranges of temperatures, produced flowers of two different colours according to its correlation with the two ranges. Biological science is replete with examples of environmental variations. It is evident, therefore, to create the appropriate supramental environment,

SRI AUROBINDO AND EVOLUTION

Sri Aurobindo wants human-material, not in the form of separate individuals, but in the form of communities and societies, as it is opined by one and all, scientists or otherwise, that human evolution has to take place through the vehicle of communities. As environment and evolutionary force has acted on some and not all for their evolution, the supramental environment will act on some, first, who have got the supramental vessel in them; and they are enough for the rest to be worked upon.

This creation of a supramental atmosphere, redolent with supramental radiations, surcharged with psychic breeze, is the supreme underlying idea of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, an Ashram which is not of an ascetic type that remains far from the maddening crowd, but a centre of day-to-day living activity with a physical and psychic system of training that gives free scope for environment to act without undue external force. It is a curious and unparalleled synthesis of physical with psychical, of body with mind, since the body is of as much importance for the process as the mind, and the idea of casting the body aside is undervalued. We cannot relegate the physical, as it cuts the foundations altogether, but we have to keep it and its attendant qualities in the background, attaching as much importance to it as is necessary for the fulfilment of divine purpose. Sri Aurobindo himself attained the Highest. He dwelled there where the Mother, now, dwells,

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on his head”.

(Goldsmith)

M. L. PARTHASARATHI

THE LIFE DIVINE

A SYNOPSIS

(Continued from last issue)

CHAPTER XXI

THE ASCENT OF LIFE

THE beginning of our cosmos was the separation of Mind from Supermind, the divine Parent. The beginning was a total separation from the divine Light, and hence darkness prevailed in the lower Nature. Life was imprisoned in Matter, and became the progenitor of death, hunger and incapacity.

Out of this utter submersion of Consciousness into Inconscience began the evolution: the upward growth of that which was buried and wholly submerged. First was the world of inconscient Matter; then Life brought in mutual devouring, death, hunger, desire and the struggle for existence; and thirdly came the evolution of conscious Mind.

As the consciousness of Mind increases so are the lower stages of Life modified: the blind struggle for existence changes to conscious co-operation and mutual help. And as Mind begins to evolve upward towards Supermind, its parent and spiritual Nature, so its self-centredness begins to open out into an all-embracing Love.

As man realises the Divine Power in the evolutionary struggle and emergence itself, so he becomes aware of the higher steps open to him. The third great status of Life—the wider possibilities of which are now opening to man—is the fullness of the conscious Life.

The evolution of Life starts with the infinite division of Matter into atomic units, which have remained persistent in spite of all other changes. Atoms aggregate into complex compounds into which Life can enter as the active principle building up living forms.

The first stage of Life is the formation of aggregate units of stable material substance; the second stage is characterised by the interchange of substance and the fusion of being with being, which introduces the opposite principle of dissolution. We have then two principles of Life: the urge of the separate ego to survive and maintain its integrity (represented in the atom of matter);

THE LIFE DIVINE (A SYNOPSIS)

and secondly the compulsion imposed by active Life to fuse itself with others. The first principle is dominant in the world of inert Matter, while the second principle becomes predominant as Life increasingly develops in the material world. New forms of life have thus been built up, though the integrity of the individualised living form has (thus far) had to be sacrificed in the process.

This second stage of Life, therefore, since it contradicts its initial aim, cannot be the final stage. The aim of the third stage—the full emergence of conscious Mind in a living material form—is to harmonise the first two principles; namely the persistence of the individual, as well as the urge to fuse himself with others without, impeding however, the survival of his whole individuality, mental, vital, physical and psychic.

The problem of immortality is centred in the soul-being, the psychic centre in man, which is the true persistent individuality of his being. It is through the soul that man becomes conscious of his past lives; but even on the mental plane he realises his origin in the innumerable individual lives of the past, and of his forming one strand of a continuous aggregate life that extends from the remotest past into the future.

The true impulse and nodus of the third status of Life is Love, which brings the individual into a happy interchange with others. The very growth and increase of Mind's freedom brings in this free mutual giving and receiving. Love is a spontaneous self-giving, though at first it is under the influence of a blind vital hunger and desire; but as Mind develops it establishes an equal commerce, the joy of giving and the joy of receiving. Finally under the influence of the upward-growing psychic flame it brings the realisation that what was hitherto regarded as the not-self is in fact a greater and dearer self than one's own individuality.

Love is the true keystone and foundation on which the fourth status of Life—where the psychic being grows into its fullness and the individual mind widens upwards to its higher reaches—can come into the evolution. Life itself becomes spiritualised and made ready for the descent of the divine Principle, Supermind, which is above though subtly connected with Mind.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

MIND cut off from its divine source causes the mental being to see only the dualities and oppositions, instead of wholeness. Life under these conditions

of ignorance, partial knowing and the clash of opposites is compelled to become restricted and limited in capacity. But Life in the evolution is also growing in consciousness, seeking its own truth and fulfilment, even as Mind seeks the truth of its own divine Nature.

The first stage of Life is the material,—submerged and confined; secondly appears the activity of growth and decay, with an insatiate craving for expansion and the unceasing struggle for existence; and thirdly appears mentality which attempts to impose its own law of equality and harmony on Life.

The whole crux of the problem lies in the fact that the individual consciousness in the world is as yet a restricted centre within a restricted environment. Man constantly seeks to know the conditions of his existence, but he always meets a limitation in Mind, a limitation which is both individual and universal.

The solution lies in finding his true self, the original seed of the Divine which was cast into the Inconscience, in order to consciously evolve and progressively manifest, at its highest and widest, the Divine Consciousness which is its essence.

We have to remember that Force and Consciousness are always one, and have their source in the Divine Nature. In their descent into the material Nature there had been the inevitable separation between Force and Consciousness, with the consequent restriction of Force and the obscuring of Consciousness. With the emergence of Life and Mind we see the blind clash of diverse forces, and the appearance of a half-lit groping consciousness which is the root of the disharmony in these lower stages of the evolution. It is only when the fourth principle, Supermind, will emerge in the evolution itself that the conflict can be resolved, in which Force is united with Consciousness in a true creative harmony.

In the present imperfect status of Mind and Life there are three difficulties which man has to overcome. First he is normally aware only of his surface being, and has little cognizance of his subconscious and subliminal layers as a whole. It is because of this that man feels himself impelled by forces he cannot control. By discovering the secret seed of the Divine Power in himself he can link himself with the true Source of cosmic Power.

The second difficulty arises from the fact that man is not only divided in his own being, but he is also separated from the true universal reality, and hence he cannot know the world and his fellow-creatures. This difficulty can be overcome through the attainment of knowledge by conscious identity; that is, by entering into the universal reality where all things find their

THE LIFE DIVINE (A SYNOPSIS)

oneness. This universal Consciousness can only be truly established in the individual when he can make contact with the all-embracing sphere above Mind, which is Supermind.

The third difficulty is created by the radical separation of force (action or will), and consciousness (thought or idea) in these lower stages of the evolution. Here we have to observe that in the original formation of Matter, Life and Mind the cosmic division was created between the higher and the lower Natures, and this division can only be finally reconciled by the descent or entry of the fourth Principle Supermind which alone can bring the higher Nature into the lower. In the same way the sharp division of individual from individual, which further accentuates the blindness and unknowing of the lower Nature with its clash and opposition of forces, can only be harmonised through the emergence of the fourth entity of the individual being—the soul—which bears the seed of the higher Nature within it.

That which man is seeking is both above him and within him; and he has therefore to grow upwards through a widening mind towards the supramental and psychic unity. These highest reaches of mind must progressively become the foundation of human life, in order to establish the fourth status of Life's ascent towards the Godhead.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DOUBLE SOUL IN MAN

THE four stages of Life's ascent are now clear: first, a compressed seed—the atom,—an inconscient restricted urge that represents the nucleus of individuality; second, a root and stem—the urge of active life,—an insatiable desire with yet limited capacity; third, a bud,—the self-evolved mental consciousness—the beginning of Love with a mixed seeking both to possess and to give itself; and fourth, a flower, the psychic consciousness opened into life, bringing the emergence of Love as a free self-giving and conscious interchange in the divine unity of souls.

The nucleus of the whole evolutionary ascent from its very beginning is the seed of soul, which is the essence of Delight of the Divine Nature. The fundamental impulse which the soul-seed imparts to Life is to manifest the Divine Bliss in the world.

As already discerned, the divine creative Power in its divinity is a four-fold principle,—Supermind, Conscious-Force, Existence and Bliss. These four

THE ADVENT

principles have projected themselves into the lower Nature as respectively Mind, Life, material Substance, and the Soul or Psychic entity which became the nucleus of the individual being.

Because the individual is as yet only partially evolved he is aware only of the surface parts of his being. There is a greater mentality behind the restricted ego, a greater life behind man's present narrow life, and a subtler material existence behind and supporting the surface physical form. In the same way there is, in the divided nature of the mental being, the double psychic entity: a surface desire-soul and a subliminal psychic being, which as yet hidden is the true soul.

It is in fact the subliminal parts of our being—the wider mind, life, body and soul—that are open to their respective cosmic planes of existence; and hence man must open himself to these subliminal zones, which are at present cut off by the thick walls of the ego.

The key to the opening up of man's inner being—or the breaking open of the restricted ego—lies in the emergence of the true soul or psychic being. At present man is only conscious of a surface or desire-soul which distorts the true consciousness and delight of his psychic being. The pure essential joy of being has thus been turned into the opposites of pleasure, pain and indifference. But these latter are merely surface reactions, relative and subjective.

Just as the subliminal mind¹ stores the essence of past mental experiences, so the subliminal soul retains the true essence of experiences received by the surface desire-soul. It is in this way that the true soul widens its experience by compelling the desire-soul to seek pleasure even in what appears painful to it and to reject what seems merely pleasure. But only when the true soul can act in the surface being in place of the ego, will the false dualities of pleasure and pain finally disappear.

Man's pursuit of a wider knowledge in science, his seeking for a higher experience and vision through art, and more directly through his widening in spiritual knowledge, all show the first steps towards an impersonal outlook that reaches beyond the narrow egoistic life. But as yet this impersonal view occupies only a small part of the individual's whole life.

The true soul, as yet veiled, is the psychic entity, the secret flame of the Divine that is inextinguishable in man. The psychic being is the original

¹ What the modern psychologists refer to as the subconscious mind is but the nether layer of the larger subliminal consciousness. A freer and more universal zone of the subliminal mind has been discovered in such phenomena as telepathy and clairvoyance.

THE LIFE DIVINE (A SYNOPSIS)

seed or spark of the pure Divine Nature, around which the evolution of the individual entity from the very beginning has grown. It is only in the higher types of man—the saint, sage and seer—that a psychic personality has begun to emerge. Only when the psychic personality replaces the petty desire-soul, can the whole nature of man's being and outer life be turned towards its real aim, the ascent into the spiritualised earthly life.

Yet we have to note that the emergence of the psychic being is but one, though essential, condition of the total transformation of the earth nature. It represents the central inner focus of the individual effort; but there are also the wider universal and transcendent movements. (These are dealt with more fully in the second volume of "The Life Divine"). We might merely note in passing that the universal transformation is instigated through man's widening and upward ascent of mind towards the Light of Supermind; while the transcendent movement—which alone can ultimately transform Nature and the earth-life—is the descent of Supermind itself, which means the coming nearer of God to man and the earth nature in response to the soul's aspiration and upward opening.

Thus we see that the psychic transformation—the first movement—brings about the spiritual change in man's being. But the spiritual change of the individual is incomplete unless the wider change in Nature, steeped as it is in Ignorance, takes place. This universal transformation can only be brought about—when the condition of the earth nature is ready for it—by the descent of the divine cosmic Power of Supermind, which is the true redeeming power in the evolutionary ascent that can bring the Law of the Divine Nature into the world.

N. PEARSON

(to be continued)

THE HUMAN CYCLE

(AN ABRIDGEMENT)

(Continued from last issue)

CHAPTER XIX

THE CURVE OF THE RATIONAL AGE

The present age of mankind may be characterised from this point of view as a more and more accelerated attempt to discover and work out the right principles and secure foundations of a rational system of society. This series seems to follow always a typical course, first, a luminous seed-time and a period of enthusiastic effort and battle, next a period of victory and achievement and brief era of possession, then disillusionment and the birth of a new idea and endeavour. If we may judge from the modern movement, it would be destined to pass through three successive stages which are the very logic of its growth,—the first individualistic and increasingly democratic with liberty for its principle, the second socialistic, in the end perhaps a governmental communism with equality and the State for its principle, the third—if that ever gets beyond the stage of theory—anarchistic in the higher sense, with brotherhood or comradeship and not government for its principle.

We have already seen that it is individualism which opens the way to the age of reason and that it gets its chance because it followed upon an age of conventionalism. But reason seeks to understand and interpret life by one kind of symbol only, the idea. This reason which is to be universally applied, cannot, however, be the reason of a ruling class, it cannot be the reason of a few pre-eminent thinkers. But in practice it is very different, for the ordinary man is not yet a rational being but thinks either according to his interests, impulses and prejudices or others more active and influential. Secondly, he does not yet use his reason in order to come to an agreement with his fellows but rather to enforce his opinions by struggle and conflict with the opinions of others. Thus the individualistic democratic ideal brings us at first to the more and more precarious rule

of a dominant class. But since the ideal of equality and freedom is abroad and cannot be stifled, it leads therefore to a war of classes, develops also a perpetual strife of parties—things which are not at all the perfection which the individualistic reason of man had contemplated as its ideal or set out to accomplish.

The natural remedy for the first defects of the individualistic theory in practice would seem to be education. Universal education, therefore, is the inevitable second step of the democratic movement in its attempt to rationalise human society. Democracy and its panacea of education and freedom have certainly done something for the race. But a new and radical defect has revealed itself: to what purpose and in what manner is the opportunity likely to be used? Old standards and methods left aside, there is a scramble for the one power left, the power of wealth. Accordingly, instead of a harmoniously ordered society there has been developed a huge organised competitive system.

The first natural result has been the transition of the rational mind from the democratic individualism to democratic socialism. Socialism, labouring under the disadvantageous accident of its birth, has been compelled to work itself out by a war of classes. And worse still, it has taken from the beginning a purely industrial and economic appearance. Its true nature, its real justification is to carry on the rational ordering of society to its fulfilment, through the reason of the whole community. This inevitable character of socialism is denied or minimised by the more democratic socialists, but even at its best the collectivist idea contains several fallacies inconsistent with the real facts of human life and nature which must eventually lead to its discredit and replacement by a third stage of the inevitable progression, founding an essential rather than formal liberty and equality upon fraternal comradeship in a free community, the ideal of intellectual as of spiritual Anarchism.

In fact the claim to equality like the thirst for liberty is individualistic in origin. Afterwards the social Reason has shifted its ground and tried to arrive at a more complete communal justice on the basis of a political, economic, educational and social equality as complete as might be; it has laboured to make a plain level on which all can stand together. Liberty in this change has had to undergo the former fate of equality.

But if both equality and liberty disappear from the human scene, there is left only one member of the democratic trinity, brotherhood, or as it is now called, comradeship. But comradeship without liberty can be nothing

THE ADVENT

more than the like association of all in common service and absolute control of the collectivist State. This is already the spirit, the social reason,—or rather the social gospel,—of the swelling tide of totalitarianism. Rationalisation is no longer the turn; its place is taken by a revolutionary mysticism which seems to be the present drive of the Time Spirit. This is a symptom that can have a considerable significance. In Russia the Marxist system of Socialism has been turned into a social religion, a collectivist *mystique*. In Fascist countries the swing away from rationalism is marked and open. If this trend becomes universal, it is the end of the Age of Reason, the suicide or the extinction of the rational and intellectual experiment. But everything hangs in the balance and the subjective turn of the human mind and life may have time and freedom to evolve and take up the spiral of the human social evolution where the curve of the Age of Reason naturally ends and by its own natural evolution make ready the ways of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XX

THE END OF THE CURVE OF REASON

THE rational collectivist idea of society has at first sight a powerful attraction. There is behind it a great truth, that every society represents a collective being and it is only by a certain relation to the society that he can find the complete use for his developed or developing powers and activities. If it be objected that to bring about the result in its completeness the liberty of the individual will have to be destroyed or reduced, it might be answered that the right of the individual to any kind of freedom as against the State is a dangerous fiction. The pity of it is that this excellent theory is sure to stumble before a discrepancy between its set ideas and the actual facts of human nature. Especially it ignores the soul of man and its supreme need of freedom. The collective being is a fact, but this being is a soul and life, not merely a mind or a body, and it works out by a diversity of opinions, wills and life, the vitality of the group-life depending largely upon the workings of this diversity.

In the old infrarational societies, what governed was not the State, but the group-soul itself through customary institutions and self-regulations to which all had to conform. This entailed indeed a great subjection of the individual to the society, but it was not felt, because the individualistic idea was not yet born and there was a remarkable latitude of social variation.

Collectivism goes exactly to the opposite extreme, it will leave no sufficient elbow-room to the individual free-will; thanks to its universal education all freedom of thought is negated and the mind of all forced into a single standardised way of thinking. Men may bear it for a time, but when its benefits become a matter of course and its defects more prominent, dissatisfaction and revolt are sure to set in. On the other hand, if from the first freedom of thought is denied, that means the end of the Age of Reason and of the ideal of a rational society.

This, the suppression or oppression of the individual freedom by the will of the majority or of a minority, is the central defect through which a socialistic State is bound to be convicted of insufficiency and condemned to pass away before the growth of a new ideal. And there would still be something infinitely worse. For a thoroughgoing scientific regulation of life can only be brought about by a thoroughgoing mechanisation of life. Life differs from the mechanical order of the universe with which the reason has been able to deal victoriously just because it is mechanical. Life, on the contrary, is a mobile, progressive and evolving force. To find amid its oppositions some principle of unity is a work the reason cannot do. It is obliged to adopt temporarily fixed—and sometimes opposite—view-points none of which is more than partially true. In the realm of thought that does not matter, but when it drives to practice, it must fix its view-points, crystallise its system. While this is an advance on the immobility of infra-rational societies, it can never arrive at perfection by its own methods, because reason is neither the first principle of life, nor can it be its last, supreme and sufficient principle.

The question remains, whether anarchistic thought supervening upon the collectivist can any more successfully find a satisfying social principle. Anarchistic thought cannot but develop in proportion as the pressure of society on the individual increases, but its extreme exaggerations are evident. Man does not actually live as an isolated being, as is sometimes claimed, but it is true that the more the outer law is replaced by the inner law the nearer man will draw to his true and natural perfection. But by what means is this to be done? Intellectual anarchism relies on two powers of the human being: the enlightenment of his reason and a natural human sympathy, the principle of fraternity, the third and most neglected of the famous revolutionary formula.

A spiritual or spiritualised anarchism might appear to come nearer to the real solution. The solution lies not in hasty rejection of civilisation,

—with its real or supposed defects,—but in the untapped powers of the soul. It is a spiritual, an inner freedom, a yet unfound law of love that can be the sure foundation for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. It may be objected that this puts off the consummation of a better human society to a far-off date, for no machinery invented by reason can perfect either the individual or the collective man. An inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few. This is not certain; but if this is not the way, then there is no way for the human kind. After all there is no necessity for the conclusion that the change cannot begin at all because its perfection is not immediately possible.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SPIRITUAL AIM AND LIFE

A SPIRITUAL society will differ in two essential points from the normal human society,—in the manner of its formation and development and in its idea of man. Starting from the gregarious instinct modified by a diversity and possible antagonism of interests, the normal society treats man essentially as a physical, vital and mental being. It is round these concepts that society is built or grows. But its inevitable decay through development suggests a radical defect somewhere. Perhaps that defect will be found in just that which society has neglected, the spiritual element, the soul in man. To say that this is an old discovery known to the religions is to mistake appearance for reality. The discovery was there, but it was made for the individual only, and it was largely other-worldly. In so far as society made use of it it was to mechanise it, to impose an imperious yoke in place of spiritual freedom. The falsehood of the old social use of religion is shown by its effects. The misplaced importance on particular socio-religious systems, on rites and customs, and the farther fact that the individual has to flee from society in order to find room for his spiritual growth are signs of its double failure, proof that such false socialisation of religion cannot regenerate mankind.

The true and full spiritual aim in society will regard man not as a mind, a life and a body, but accepting the truth of man's soul as essentially divine, it will also accept the possibility of his whole being becoming divine in spite of Nature's patent contradiction of this possibility. It will regard every human society, nation, people or other organic aggregate from the same

standpoint, sub-souls, as it were, means of a complete manifestation and self-fulfilment of the Spirit, the divine Reality, the conscious Infinite in man upon earth. But in this a large liberty will be the law of a spiritual society, it will not seek to impose even this single dogma on his science and philosophy, his art or ethics.

CHAPTER XXII

THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

OUR normal life is a balance between two complementary powers,—the life-will which is instinctive and automatic, and the modifying mind-will. Dissatisfied with our present conditions thinkers sometimes speak of a life according to nature as the remedy of all our ills. But the common defect of all such thinking is to miss the true character of man and the true law of his being. The idea that to develop the superman out of our present unsatisfactory humanity, to become ourselves by exceeding ourselves, as one of them says, is our real business is sound in itself. But then what is our self, our real nature?

We see that at first sight man seems to be a double nature, animal and rational. All his unease comes from man's practical failure to solve the riddle and difficulty of his double nature. The higher life of reason is still something that is superimposed on the lower. It is so even with rare individuals, there is a dominance, but not a transformation. Life cannot be entirely rational, mind is not the destined archangel of the transformation. As a reaction against such chimerical ideals the mind is then used—as seems to be the case with modern civilisation—as a slave of life and body. The result has been a vital titanism, and it has ended badly, as it always must. For a while the pressure of events has forced a nobler ethics and reason as a means for the better ordering of individual, national and international life. But this, well-enough for a first step, is not the real and final solution.

For that we have to return to the pursuit of an ancient secret,—the ideal of the Kingdom of God. This cannot be done, as past attempts show, either by a divorce between life and spirit or a departure into other worlds or a compromise or by a superimposing of the spiritual life or some of its ideas and motives on the mental, vital and physical life. This is the most that human society has done in the past.

The secret of the transformation lies in the transference of our centre of

THE ADVENT

living to a higher consciousness and in a change of our main power of being. All that we have done so far is some half successful effort to transfer the will and power to the mental plane. To complete this upward transference we must go further, choose between the domination of the vital part in us and the spontaneous obedience of the spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, which will be other and greater than the limited perfection of arrested development we see already accomplished in the workings of physical Nature. Hence this perfection cannot come by the mental idea dealing with the Spirit—that was Asia's mistake—as it deals with life. For the mind and the intellect are not the key powers of our existence. Only when this transference and the dynamic transformation that follows it have been completed we shall be on the right road to become ourselves, live in our true, satisfied self-existence in our real being and divine nature.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONDITIONS OF THE COMING OF A SPIRITUAL AGE.

A CHANGE of this kind must be necessarily accomplished first in the individual and a great number of individuals. The mass follows, but unfortunately in a very imperfect and confused fashion. For this change to arrive and endure two conditions have to be simultaneously fulfilled: there must be individual or individuals who have remade themselves in the image of the Spirit and who are able to communicate both their idea and power to the mass, also there must be a society ready to receive and effectively assimilate what is being offered.

A subjective age may stop very far short of spirituality, it is a beginning, not an end. After the material formula the modern times have landed us in a surface vitalism whose mixed working may be seen in the world war. But beyond this there is the possibility of a mental and even a psychic subjectivism. This too would have its dangers, but it would have a chance of a detecting discernment, lacking in the former. Moving with difficulty from Matter to Spirit, this is perhaps a necessary stage of man's development. If mankind is to be spiritualised, it must first in the mass cease to be the material or the vital man and become the psychic and the true mental being. From this point of view it is a sign of great promise that the wheel of civilisation has been following its past and present curve upward from a solid physical knowledge through a successive sounding of higher and higher powers

THE HUMAN CYCLE (AN ABRIDGEMENT)

that mediate between Matter and Spirit, with a large but swift evocation of each level.

The true secret can only be discovered if in the third stage, the idea, becomes strong of the mind itself as no more than a secondary power of the Spirit's workings and of the Spirit as the original and the sole reality. Then only will a spiritual age of mankind become possible, which would start from and realise three essential truths of existence which are as yet for the mass of mankind only words and dreams, God, freedom and unity, three things which are one.

A spiritual society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego but in the spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. But the elimination of egoism would not be brought about by persuading or forcing the individual to immolate his personal will and aspirations to the collective will, aims and egoisms of society. A society which was even initially spiritualised would make the revealing and finding the divine Self, in man and the group, the first aim of all its activities. But as this is not an external idea or rule, its aim will be to diminish as soon and as far as possible the element of external compulsion in human life. This will not mean a breaking up of all human society into the isolated action of individuals, for the third word of the Spirit is unity. He who sees God in all, will not live either for himself or for the State and society, but for God in himself and for the Divine in the universe. The spiritual age will be ready to set in when the common mind begins to be alive to these truths and to be moved or desire to be moved by this triple and triune spirit.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ADVENT AND PROGRESS OF THE SPIRITUAL AGE

For a spiritual society to come into being it is not enough that certain ideas favourable to that turn of human life should take possession of the general mind of the race. For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration, sometimes the holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal. More is needed: there must be a dynamic re-creating of individual manhood in the spiritual type. As will be the spirit and type of the individuals consisting it, so will be the realised spirit of the collectivity and its powers of life.

A great access of spirituality in the past has ordinarily meant the coming

of a new religion and its endeavour to impose itself upon mankind as a new universal order. This, however, was always not only a premature but a wrong crystallisation. Apart from the usual tendency of these credal religions to turn to an afterworld, their attempt is contrary to the variety of human nature and to at least one essential character of the Spirit, a spacious inner freedom and large unity into which each man must be allowed to grow according to his own nature. The one thing essential must take precedence. Therefore the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new ages will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being. That evolution or conversion—it does not greatly matter which figure we use or what theory we adopt to support it—will be their ideal and endeavour. Failures must be originally numerous in everything great and difficult, but an *a priori* declaration of impossibility is a sign of ignorance and weakness. By the doing the difficulty will be solved.

But the thing to be done is as large as human life, and therefore the individuals who lead the way will take all human life for their province. They will hold that all can be made the spirit's means of self-finding and all can be converted into its instruments of divine living. This endeavour will be a supreme and difficult labour for the individual, but much more for the race. Even for the few the ascent to the first spiritual levels would not be the end, there would be still higher levels. But once the foundation has been secured, the next develops by a progressive self-revelation, and the soul is sure of its way: the earthly evolution will have taken its great impetus upward and accomplished the revealing step in a divine progression of which the birth of thinking and aspiring man from the animal nature was only an obscure and a far-off promise.

SISIR KUMAR GHOSH

THE PROPHET OF FUTURE HUMANITY

(Summary of the presidential address of Shri R. R. Diwakar, Rajyapal of Bihar, delivered on the occasion of the Mother's birthday celebration, under the auspices of the Sri Aurobindo Study Centre, Banaras, on the 21st February, 1955)

THE Ashramites at Pondicherry and devotees of Sri Aurobindo have been observing four days in a year as being very significant in the march of Sri Aurobindo towards the great ideal of the realisation of the Supermind on earth. The Mother's day, which is the birthday of the Mother in the Ashram, is one of them. But by whatever name the days are called and for whatever purpose a particular day is assigned, every one of these days is intimately related with the spiritual progress of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo's originality and distinct advance in many of the very important aspects of spiritual life, Sadhana, and Siddhi, is unmistakable. He has expounded his philosophy and described his experiences, sometimes in prose and sometimes in poetry, but always in a very clear language, and one can say that he has done so quite extensively. A brief acquaintance with his teachings induces me to characterize him as the prophet of future humanity.

On such occasions as the present one, it is not possible either to expound his philosophy or to treat exhaustively even some aspects of it. It is more an occasion when one should be humble, reverential, contemplative, and be satisfied by indicating the grandeur and significance of the great vision of the modern Rishi that Sri Aurobindo was.

Before however, saying anything about some aspects of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, I may express myself as regards the importance of the conception of Mother as Goddess.

Sri Aurobindo has written enough about the important rôle that the Mother of the Ashram has played both in the matter of his Sadhana as well as in the Sadhana of numerous people who received guidance from him through her. That ground need not be gone over here again. Most of us are also familiar with the Mother's great organising capacity and all have realised as to why she is really called the Mother of the Ashram. The

educational activities and experiments conducted in the Ashram in recent times are positive proof also of the creative power of the Mother. I do not propose to deal with all those things here. But what I would like to do is to say something regarding the conception of Mother as Godhead.

Religions, ancient as well as modern, are familiar with 'Mother' either as the highest Godhead or as something very near to it. We read also of matriarchal societies which have given the mother the highest place in the organisation and structure of human groups. The idea of *Durga*, *Lakshmi* and of *Kali*, the Mother, is also very familiar to us not only in mythology but as the Divine figure in the cult of Bhakti as well as of Tantra. I do not think that I have time enough here to go into the details of the different forms and attributes of these Goddesses and the reasons for them. I would rather like to think in terms of the rationale of the basic conception of 'Mother' as Godhead.

The mother occupies, biologically and psychologically speaking, the highest and the most important place in the emotional life of every human being. The reasons are obvious. It is but natural that it should be so. The mother is the nearest being with whom the contact of the child is the utmost. Even before coming out into the world and getting into touch with the first gush of experience of outside environment, the child is cosily housed in the very womb of the mother with every conceivable protection and perfect arrangements for its growth, up to a point. The mother not only conceives the child and grows it, but she protects it, feeds it, brings it forth, breeds it and brings it up. Since all this is done to the child at a time and under circumstances when it is in the most helpless condition and when it requires all the help and support that is available for its development, it is more than natural that its emotional life, consisting of love, the sense of being protected, the sense of being given strength, should be built up round the mother. There is no comparison between the strong feeling of identity that the mother feels for the child and the child for the mother and similar emotions regarding any other relative, even including the father. Perhaps this is comparable only with the sense of identity that one later experiences in youth between the lover and the beloved. All other intimacies are arrived at more through perception, intellect and hearsay evidence rather than through instinct, intuition and the total experience of identity. In fact, the personality of the child as a separate entity does not seem to exist in the beginning at all but is a growth after it comes into the world and senses it as a separate being. I think all this

THE PROPHET OF FUTURE HUMANITY

background is woven into the pattern of the very intimately worshipful approach of man towards mother and mother goddesses.

It is in this perspective that we have to understand and study Ramkrishna Paramahansa's Bhakti of Kali, the Mother. What Sri Aurobindo has written about the Mother and her four powers can be apprehended better only if this perspective is kept in view.

I have said that Sri Aurobindo is the prophet of future humanity. I wish to refer here only to a few aspects of his teachings in the light of this remark of mine. While Sri Aurobindo had the highest regard for the past and a deep reverence for the spiritual attainments of our ancient culture, he saw that new visions must dawn on humanity and greater heights must be scaled if evolution had any meaning, and if the infinite, 'creative potential' of the Spirit had reality. In fact, the greatest urge in him pushed him far ahead of the present and invested him with powers which conveyed him to heights unknown before. For him the orthodox type of spiritual attainment ending in Samadhi of one type or the other was but a step. True to his vision, he was bold enough to say that the destiny of man did not end with samadhis and beatitudes. In this connection, we have to realise that the targets reached in the past are not the final targets either for the present or for the future man. They are but landmarks. In fact, to put it a little paradoxically, our future does not lie in the past but far far ahead though attainable only on the strength of the past. The spiritual dawn for man in the past is already ripening into a stage which would soon lead to the 'noons of the future'. The present-day humanity is carrying the whole of the past with it rolled into itself, woven into its very fabric, and is moving fast to the future. The spirit of man would not rest and, in fact, cannot rest with what it has achieved. Rest and sleep are not for the spirit. In the very nature of things the spirit must go forward and higher. Spirit is nothing if it is not creative, if it is not fresh, if it is not new, every moment. Repetition, inertia, staleness are characteristics of matter and not of the spirit. Here the call of Sri Aurobindo is clear and bold without at the same time being any the less respectful for the past. There is no doubt that so far the life-force has achieved much and gained mastery over matter and forged a subtle instrument for the expression of the spirit through man. But the question is, is this the end? Undoubtedly Sri Aurobindo declares that spiritual evolution is a process and what has been achieved by the spirit in the field of matter, life, and mind is but a stage. The degree of self-consciousness that man has attained today and is capable of attaining tomorrow must be said to be the precursor of greater responsi-

THE ADVENT

bility for taking conscious and deliberate steps in order to co-operate with the inner spiritual evolution that is already and ever on. Man in the present stage would not be discharging his proper and legitimate function if he remains static or looks to the past for his ideals. He can rightly claim to take part in the evolutionary process only if he visualizes the vast possibilities of refining the instruments of matter, life, and mind and of expressing the spirit on higher and subtler planes of existence in the future and carries on suitable Sadhana to that end.

I do admit that there has been enough speculation by a number of writers in the matter of the future man. Some have even tried to describe him as all brain and few limbs. Others have visualized a press-button civilization almost equal to the conception of Kamadhenu and Kalpavriksha. Some have been satisfied by naming the future man, a Superman. But it was reserved for Sri Aurobindo to base the speculation not on imagination or chance visions but on the study of evolutionary trends in a scientific way and bring his spiritual insight to bear upon it. His contribution in this matter is therefore not only substantial but unique. He has explained it in a manner which is quite cogent, attractive, and convincing.

If Sri Aurobindo has been the pioneer in the field of visualizing a concrete state of future being for man, he has been also a bold adventurer in the special methods of spiritual Sadhana adopted and advocated by him. Here his synthesising genius is seen assimilating the foregone ways of all the old and existing systems in a comprehensive sweep and then formulating a method which is true to its name 'integral'. It may be noted that he had no spiritual 'Guru' as such. Not that he underestimates the importance of a guide in spiritual matters, but it happened that none but the 'Inner Purushotama' could show him the way in his unorthodox seekings and his bold, venturesome attempts in this field. For a time, he sought the help of a Yogi, but the Yogi himself saw that Sri Aurobindo was proceeding beyond the depths which he could fathom and therefore advised Sri Aurobindo to follow his 'Inner Light' and surrender entirely to it. It happened that even afterwards at some juncture, the Yogi aforesaid thought that Sri Aurobindo was in the hands of undesirable 'powers'. He warned Sri Aurobindo to that effect and left him. It is obvious that the future proved the Yogi to be a false prophet and justified Sri Aurobindo's complete surrender to the inner 'Person'.

Integral Yoga or the synthesis of all the various Yogas, such as Rajayoga, Bhaktiyoga and others, has been evolved by Sri Aurobindo as the spiritual

THE PROPHET OF FUTURE HUMANITY

Sadhana of the future. Each of the Yogas taken by itself emphasises the use mainly of one of the powers and faculties of man as an instrument of spiritual evolution. Other faculties and powers are expected to play a contributory part. But Sri Aurobindo saw that there could be a far quicker and more effective way. Instead of canalising the energies of one's being at a time into a single channel such as Jnana, Karma, or love, while approaching the Supreme, one could as well begin by dedicating one's whole being by one supreme effort of the will. This would be something like a total and simultaneous conscription of all that one's being consists of—of the whole and the entire personality. Thereafter, the Sadhaka is to continue his intense and ceaseless striving till the poise becomes a possession and the personality exists as but a channel through which the Divine shines forth and acts. This ideal has to be reached, however, through the instrumentality of the Supermind, which is the Truth-conscious power of the Divine.

It may be said that right in the beginning, when India first came face to face with the materialistic, scientific, as well as intellectual achievements of the West, it was dazzled and dazed. There was a time when most of the very highly educated Indians thought that there was not much that was valuable in our past achievements. But India had not yet become quite barren and proved that it could yet easily throw up great seers, saints, and men of action. The galaxy of such personalities as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand, Lokmanya Tilak, Rabindranath, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo (though the last to depart, the most versatile of them), is enough to show the depths of India's spirituality and its vitality to survive and regenerate with full vigour. In Sri Aurobindo we do not see only an interpreter of the past treasure of wisdom, nor a mere glorifier of the ancient achievements, nor one who is satisfied with the heights reached by former seers. Here we have one who has synthesised spirit and matter, the East and the West, combined the scientific attitude with spiritual vision, and one who has tried to stand on the shoulders of the ancients to peep into the unknown future. He was a great patriot who continued to be a humanist. He was a scholar without losing touch with everyday life. He was a poet without ceasing to be a seer. And he was a saint ceaselessly striving for the world. The secret of his dynamism lay in his seeming inactivity, and his physical retirement ultimately led to the creation of one of the most powerful bodies of thought and Sadhana. To him our Pranams today.

This is my humble tribute to him on this great day, the day of remembrance of the birthday of the Mother.

R. R. DIWAKAR

REVIEW

Fundamentals of Hinduism by *Satish Chandra Chatterjee*, Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University. Publishers: Das Gupta & Co., Ltd. 54/3, College Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 3/8

Paradoxical as it may sound, Hinduism is a religion which defies all attempt to define it. This is because of its peculiar character. It has no definite creed, as Islam or Christianity has, nor any single founder or prophet as these religions have, nor any single book, like the Koran or the Bible, in which that founder or prophet's teachings are recorded. It no doubt has its scriptures which are treated as revealed writings, but these record the teachings and experiences of a large number of sages and not of any one sage, and they do not formulate any definite creed but rather help to build up a philosophy and a way of life.

This is what the author has pointed out (at p. 2), when he says, "To define Hinduism is a delicate and difficult task. This is so, not because it is a very abstract and mystic religion, but because it is very wide and, in a sense, universal in its scope. It is not based on the message of any single prophet or incarnation of God, nor on the teachings of any one saint, sage or religious reformer. On the other hand, Hinduism is founded on the varied religious and moral experiences and teachings of many ancient, mediaeval and modern Indian sages and saints and devotees—Munis, Rishis, Acharyas and Bhaktas."

Why does the author, however, say, "So by Hinduism we here mean Hindu Dharma in the sense of Hindu religion" (p. 1)? This statement evidently causes a good deal of confusion. Hinduism is certainly not Hindu Dharma in the sense of Hindu religion. In fact, Hindu Dharma in the sense of Hindu religion has no meaning, for the ideas conveyed by the two words dharma and religion are quite different. The conception of Dharma is a peculiar feature of Indian culture. It is that upon which not only Hinduism but also Buddhism, Jainism, and indeed all faiths which have had their origin in our country, are based. Hinduism is Hindu Dharma. It can be called a religion, only because Dharma as a way of life and a philosophy of life includes certain emotional attitudes, as well as modes of worship and ritualistic practices which go by the name of religion.

To do the author justice, it must be said that he has also on the whole stuck to this position. This is indeed the justification for the subtitle of his book, "A philosophical study". To the credit of the author, it must be said that he has maintained this position consistently in the book, that is, he has made a study of Hinduism from the philosophical standpoint and shown what Hinduism means as a philosophy of life.

What, however, is this philosophy? If Hinduism has no definite creed, can it be said to have a definite philosophy? The author is bold enough to say, "Yes, and that philosophy is monistic." It is undoubtedly a very bold statement (and we admire the author for his boldness), for are there not distinctly dualistic philosophies, like the *Sāṃkhya*, for instance, which also find a place in Hinduism? But we think our author is right. The *Sāṃkhya*, though it seems to postulate a dualism of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, is in essence monistic, for in the ultimate condition *Prakṛti* vanishes and *Puruṣa* alone remains. Moreover, in the earlier forms of it, as we have in the *Mahābhārata*, for instance, it is distinctly monistic, for there is the clear recognition of a Supreme Reality as the Source of both *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. Further, even admitting that there are dualistic systems within the Hindu fold, this ought not to blind us to the main current running through Hinduism, which undoubtedly is monistic. As the author says (at pp. 12-13), "The belief in one reality or existence as manifesting itself in many forms, including the gods and goddesses, is an undercurrent which runs throughout the Vedas and asserts itself as a stable conviction in the Upanishads. Hinduism in its subsequent development is firmly based on the foundations laid in the Upanishads which are at once the concluding and crowning parts of the Vedas. So we seem to be justified in saying that it is a monistic religion which believes in one existence or spiritual reality and treats all else as manifestations thereof."

The next question which the author discusses is: What is the nature of God as conceived in Hinduism? In particular, is He *nirguṇa* or *saguṇa*? Here it must be pointed out, that to describe God as 'neti, neti' ('not this, not this') does not necessarily mean that He is without attributes. It only means that no finite attribute can exhaust His nature. This leaves open the question whether He is completely *nirguṇa*, that is, devoid of all content, as the Advaita Vedantist maintains. On the whole, we think there will be general agreement with our author's standpoint, namely, that the Hindu idea of God is that of *Bhagavān*, which name as he points out, "seems to indicate the principal contents of the Hindu idea of God" (pp. 15-16).

He further says (p.16), "God is named Bhagavan because He possesses to the full the six perfections (*ṣaḍaiśvarya*) and is majestic, almighty, all-glorious, infinitely beautiful and possessed of infinite knowledge and perfect freedom from attachment." That this is not the description of Him in the *Purāṇas* or in the later *Upaṇiṣads* which preach a Bhakti cult, but is found in those *Upaṇiṣads* which nobody can describe as preaching the Bhakti cult, such as the *Isopaniṣad* and the *Kāthopaniṣad*, further strengthens the author's standpoint. In the *Isopaniṣad*, for instance, it is said about God that He is "*kavir maṇiṣi paribhīḥ svayambhūḥ yāthātathyoto'rthān vyadadhāt śāśvatibhyaḥ samābhyaḥ*" ("The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal"—Sri Aurobindo's translation). In the *Kāthopaniṣad*, again, He is described as "*aṇoraṇīyān mahato mahīyān*" ("smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest").

The author, however, has mixed up the question of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* God with that of His transcendence and immanence. A *saguṇa* God need not necessarily be immanent, nor a *nirguṇa* God transcendent. A *nirguṇa* God may pervade and rule the entire universe, as, for instance, when *Yājñavalkya* says in the *Bṛhadaraṇyakopaniṣad*, (3.8.9) "By the rule of this *Akṣara*, O Gargi, the heaven and the earth are held", and in that sense must be treated as immanent. A *saguṇa* God, again, may have among His attributes such as are not found in the world, and for that reason must be treated as transcendent.... To call God *Bhagavān* does not mean treating Him merely as an immanent God. There are features in the concept of *Bhagavān* which point to the transcendent aspect of God. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.2.11) *Brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān* are treated as synonymous terms. The author, however, is right in saying that the Hindu conception of God includes both His transcendent and immanent aspects.

Space does not permit us to dwell on other features of Hinduism dealt with by the author. We can only state briefly that he has treated of all the main features of Hinduism, such as the conception of Self, the doctrine of Rebirth, the law of Karma, the doctrine of bondage and liberation, and the three paths of Knowledge, Action and Devotion. Under the title, "The natural course of liberation", the author has dealt with the philosophy of *Varṇāśrama Dharma*.

The book is undoubtedly a very good exposition of Hindu Dharma, and we can safely recommend it as an excellent manual of Hinduism, with a stress on the philosophical side. What the book lacks is an evolutionary

REVIEW

view. The author presents Hinduism as if it was born, like Minerva, in panoply. That it has an evolution, a history in which, through the clash of conflicting ideas, it has, by virtue of its essential dynamism, acquired its present character, is a thing ignored by the author. Nevertheless we have nothing but admiration for the thoroughness with which he has dealt with the main features of Hinduism, and the book is undoubtedly an authoritative treatise on the subject written in a lucid style.

S. K. MAITRA

Lord of battles, king of the Gods, prosper in us, bring us plenitude, O hundred-willed. By the path, by the offerings, by the bringing into being of the gods, we have become full of peace and won inspired knowledge.

For these are his warrior blessings : Indra is the life of men. Come to us, O master of plenitude and guard us : milk out for us a nourishing force.

(Rig Veda)

SRI AUROBINDO

Published by P. Counouma
Printed at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry

To be had of:

SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, 369, Esplanade, Madras

269/3/55/800

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VI

(Based on the Mother's Talks)

by Nolini Kanta Gupta

Price—Paper: Rs. 2

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE		XXIV. Meditation and Some Questions
I. Realisation—Past and Future		XXV. Meditation and Meditation
II. The Spiral Universe		XXVI. Prayer and Aspiration
III. This Expanding Universe		XXVII. Offering and Surrender
IV. The World Serpent		XXVIII. Equality of the Body—Equality of the Spirit
V. This Mystery of Existence		XXIX. Personal Effort and Will
VI. Record of World-History		XXX. How to feel that we belong to the Divine
VII. Freedom and Destiny		XXXI. Sincerity is Victory
SECTION TWO		XXXII. Images of gods and goddesses
VIII. The Divine Truth—Its name and form		SECTION FIVE
IX. The Symbolic Ignorance		XXXIII. Yogic Centres
X. Diseases and Accidents		XXXIV. The Inner and the Outer
XI. The Problem of Evil		XXXV. And This Agile Reason
XII. This Ugliness of the World		XXXVI. The Force of Body
XIII. Divine Justice		Consciousness
XIV. The Divine Suffering		XXXVII. The Body and the Psychic
XV. "Divine Disgust"		XXXVIII. The Psychic Being—Some Mysteries
SECTION THREE		XXXIX. The Past Lives and the Psychic Being
XVI. Things Significant and Insignificant		XL. The Homogeneous Being
XVII. Why do we forget things?		XLI. Service Human and Divine
XVIII. How to get rid of troublesome thoughts		XLII. The Divine Family
XIX. Bad Thought Formation		SECTION SIX
XX. Why are Dreams Forgotten		XLIII. The Nature and Destiny of
XXI. To the Children of the Ashram		XLIV. Music—Its Origin and Nature
SECTION FOUR		XLV. Indian and European Music
XXII. On Occultism		XLVI. Specialisation
XXIII. Mysticism and Occultism		

Can be had of

SRI AUROBINDO BOOKS DISTRIBUTION AGENCY LTD.,
PONDICHERRY

32, Rampart Row,
BOMBAY 1.

41 N, Connaught Circus,
NEW DELHI.

15, College Square,
CALCUTTA 12.